

Commentary

Troop Talk

In the early hours of Sept. 21, a gunman opened fire outside of Graham's Central Station, a nightclub in El Paso. Eleven people were shot, but fortunately no one was killed. There was an altercation inside the nightclub that escalated into a fight outside in the parking lot, according to an article in the *El Paso Times*. During the fight, shots were fired and several bystanders were hit. A Soldier was grazed by a bullet while trying to leave the area. Luckily, the wound did not seem to have caused any lasting injury.

Confrontations can turn violent very quickly, especially when people are drinking alcohol. If you are at a bar or nightclub and there is a fight developing, remove yourself from the situation as quickly and safely as you can. Don't stand around and watch what happens. Arguments can get out of hand, and it is not worth the risk



of being caught in the middle.

Although Graham's Central Station is not off-limits to Soldiers, other locations have been placed off limits due to drug activity, violence or other problems. Off-limit businesses are: St. Cuthbert's Trading Post at 2200 North Yarbrough, La Chandra at 4607 Dyer St., Club Volare (also called Club Foot or Club Rico) at 201 North Stanton St., Capone's Bar (also called Club ER) at 412 East San Antonio, and Margarita's Nightclub at 8750 Gateway Blvd. East.

Juarez is still off-limits for servicemembers, and non-servicemembers are strongly urged to stay on this side of the border until Juarez is safer.

El Paso Police believe the shooting may have been gang-motivated, according to reports cited in the *Times*. Police said a stabbing Thursday night at a downtown bar may also have been gang-related. All Fort Bliss personnel are encouraged to avoid locations or events

known for attracting gang activity. There are places to go on post, such as the nightclub in the Centennial Club, which offer fun activities in a safe environment.

The safety of every member of Team Bliss is my concern. Please keep safety a high priority, whether you are training, driving your personally owned vehicle or out at a nightclub. If you are going to drink alcohol, please drink responsibly and either take a taxi or have a designated driver. There will always be dangers that are outside your control, but by using common sense and avoiding high-risk locations, you can increase your chances of staying safe.

HBromberg

Maj. Gen. Howard B. Bromberg
Fort Bliss Commanding General

Team

Continued from Page 1

have Bromberg run alongside her and her teammates.

"That was very nice, for [Bromberg] to take the time out to run with us," said Stavinoha. "He seemed genuinely interested in our success."

Having trained "pretty hard" in the last few months, Stavinoha said she feels like she is as ready for the race as she can be. Her two goals Sunday are to beat her best time of 1 hour, 1 minute, and to win a medal, or "bring home some hardware," as she puts it.

Smith will leave from El Paso International Airport today as part of the team's advance party. The opportunity to run with the CG was great because it showed the support the Team Bliss Ten-Miler team is getting from the installation's senior commanders, Smith said Friday.

"This team is a more disciplined team than from years past," said Smith. "Whereas some [teams] are just going there to participate, this team is going there to compete and hopefully bring back some medals."

Smith said running a half marathon in Albuquerque, N.M., and the German Night Run here provided him with a good picture of where his fitness level is at, which is "close to 100 percent," he said.

"I believe I'm ready to run the best race if my military career," said Smith. "It's a great feeling, because I treat this like the Olympics for the military."

Concerning the performances of himself and his teams at the Ten-Miler, Smith said his objectives are to beat his own best time of 56:30 and place within the top three in both the men's and women's categories – a feat he is confident both teams can accomplish this year.



Pentagon Channel Information

The Pentagon Channel is aired on post and around the El Paso area. Sun City Soldier, the Fort Bliss news show, is broadcast on the Pentagon Channel Thursday at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 4:30 a.m., or watch the show on Time Warner Cable Channel 15 Monday and Thursday at 6:30 p.m. Watch the 24-hour Pentagon Channel on Time Warner Channel 20, or log onto www.pentagonchannel.mil.

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Department of the Army www.army.mil
Department of Defense www.defenselink.mil
Defense Finance Accounting Service www.dod.mil/dfas
Army Knowledge Online www.us.army.mil
Civilian Personnel Online www.cpol.army.mil
Fort Bliss MWR www.blissmwr.com
AAFES Job Opportunities http://odin.aafes.com/employment/hr_info.asp
DeCA Job Opportunities www.commissaries.com/inside_deca/HR/employment_opportunities.cfm

Employment-related Web Sites

www.urgjobs.org
www.usajobs.gov
www.cpol.army.mil
www.armymwr.com
www.aafes.com
www.blissmwr.com/jobs/
www.milspouse.org
www.msjs.org

2008 DWIs by brigade/unit				
Unit	Unit Strength	% of Bliss Population	% of Total DWI	DWIs
USAADASCH	982	6%	5.50%	11
32nd AAMDC	4384	26%	10.50%	21
1/1 AD	3745	22%	4.50%	9
4/1 AD	3821	23%	29.00%	58
5th AR Bde.	183	1%	2.50%	5
FFID	1133	7%	6.00%	12
Garrison	916	5%	3.00%	6
USASMA	153	1%	1.00%	2
WBAMC	869	5%	4.50%	9
Separate Units	719	4%	4.00%	8
FM/Civ/Other Mil			29.50%	59
TOTALS	16905			200

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Submit articles to monitor@conus.army.mil.

JTF North commander promoted to one-star

ARMANDO CARRASCO

JTF North Public Affairs

The Joint Task Force North commander, Col. Sean B. MacFarland, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general during a Friday promotion ceremony conducted at Old Fort Bliss.

MacFarland, who has commanded JTF North since June 10, was promoted by Lt. Gen. Thomas R. Turner, commanding general of U.S. Army North, the Joint Force Land Component Command of U.S. Northern Command. JFLCC assumed operational command of JTF North Wednesday.

"I watched Sean [MacFarland] in good times and I watched him in bad times. He is exactly the kind of officer that we need leading our armed forces, leading our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines in the 21st century," said Turner.

"Sean is a leader that totally understands today's operational environment, a leader that has proven in combat that he can conduct offensive, defensive and stability operations concurrently and achieves effects, to achieve ends, to win. And Sean is a leader that loves and cares for Soldiers," said Turner.

MacFarland, who previously served with Turner in Germany and Iraq, first came to Fort Bliss after graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in 1981.

"We are gathered at a replica of an old cavalry post because the formative part of my career was spent as a cavalry officer – a career that began right here at Fort Bliss in the 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment," said MacFarland, whose grandfather also served at Fort Bliss with the 82nd Horse Artillery Regiment. The house where his grandparents lived was located near the Old Fort Bliss replica. It was also in El Paso where he met and married his wife, Lynda.

MacFarland served as the operations officer (G-3) of V Corps from April 2004 to June 2005, prior to assuming command of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division – the "Ready First" Combat Team – in Friedberg, Germany.

While deployed to Iraq, 1-1 AD was responsible for



ARMANDO CARRASCO

Lt. Gen. Thomas R. Turner, commanding general of U.S. Army North, left, promotes Col. Sean B. MacFarland, second from left, the Joint Task Force North commander, to the rank of brigadier general. Assisting in the promotion ceremony is MacFarland's wife, Lynda, and his father, Garth MacFarland, who placed the one star insignia on his newly promoted son's beret.

Tal Afar and west Ninewah province for four months before moving to Ramadi, where they fought as a reinforced, joint Army/Marine brigade combat team for nine months. While in Ramadi, the Ready First initiated the Sunni tribal engagement strategy that turned Al Anbar province from the most hostile to the most peaceful province in Iraq in less than a year and has spread across Iraq. After redeploying and inactivating the brigade combat team, he served as chief of the Iraq division, plans and policy officer, the Joint Staff, for approximately one year before assuming command of JTF North.

After being promoted MacFarland said, "I wear these stars not to honor myself, but to honor the men and women who served and fought under my command. I

wear them because they task me to be worthy of my fallen comrades in all things and to make their sacrifices count. I wear them because I know of no better way to continue to serve the cause they so nobly advanced.

"Even though these stars weigh just a few ounces, they rest heavily on my shoulders today as constant reminders of my obligations to duty, honor, country, and the memory of 96 American warriors who, while under my command, turned the tide of war in a terrible place, and made victory in Iraq not only possible, but put it within reach," said MacFarland.

MacFarland's old brigade combat team – along with the rest of the 1st Armored Div., which was previously stationed in Germany – will now be based here.

Purple Heart recipient medically retires with positive outlook

VIRGINIA REZA

Monitor Staff

"I would have stayed 32 years or until they kicked me out for being too old and not being able to play," said retired Sgt. 1st Class Winslow Borzotra during his Purple Heart ceremony Friday at the Warrior Transition Battalion building.

Borzotra was medically retired two weeks earlier due to complications after being wounded twice. The first wound was in November 2004 during the battle of Fallujah, where he was knocked unconscious when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his tank. His crew radioed him as dead after seeing he was bleeding profusely and checking for his nonexistent vital signs. He remained unconscious in the back seat of the tank for about five minutes while his crew got back to the fight, as they were still receiving fire. When he became cognizant, he said, it took him a few minutes to realize what was going on.

"When you wake up to gunfire inside a tank and everyone is shouting orders and the main gun is firing, it takes a few minutes to process all that and get back into the game," Borzotra said. "I was trying to take charge, but I was babbling. As soon as they realized I wasn't dead, my gunner turned everything back over to me."

Borzotra said his crew did everything they could to ensure he stayed alive. They stuck an intravenous needle in his arm and performed first aid while still fighting insurgents. He said the second in command was his tanker, a specialist at the time, who took charge without hesitation.

At the time, Borzotra was a section leader in charge of two tanks. His unit, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, was attached to the Marine Corps. Their mission was to clear out the eastern sector of Fallujah, which included dismounting from the tanks and crawling through dark tunnels that had been dug out in the dirt roads.

Borzotra received his second head wound three weeks later during an insurgent attack in Baquba, Iraq, after his AT-4 malfunctioned and detonated 15 feet in front of him. Borzotra and three other Soldiers were knocked unconscious for a few minutes. A few weeks later he began to experience balance issues, memory loss and

sudden recurring mood swings. After returning to the U.S., his conditioned worsened. In the later part of 2005 he began suffering from severe vertigo attacks, which incapacitated him for up to 45 minutes. Despite rigorous rehabilitation procedures, the doctors determined Borzotra was unable to continue service in the Army.

Borzotra now wears a medical bracelet with a brief description of his medical facts engraved on it. He suffers attacks three to four times a week. He said the attacks feel like being in a fast-spinning merry-go-round to the point where he can't stand up.

"My brain is telling me that my body is spinning, but my eyes and senses tell me, 'No you are not,' so there is a conflict there and what it does is completely incapacitates me and I'll just drop to the ground," Borzotra said.

The 36-year-old Army brat and his wife and three children are relocating to Kentucky, where his relatives live. He said they wanted to stay in El Paso because they fell in love with the city and met great people, but they need a bigger support system because his injuries have impacted his family.

"The Army is a great place to be," Borzotra said. "The leadership skills you get here are highly required in the civilian workforce."

Borzotra said he realized being in the Army is rough right now because of the war and back-to-back deployments, but said it pays off with the limitless benefits the Army provides.

"If I would have known then what I know now, I would have a master's degree by now and the Army would have paid for it all," Borzotra said. "Even if you get deployed, there is not reason to stop going to school. It will help you succeed in the civilian life, and if you decide to stay in, it will make you a better leader."

Borzotra said he also admires the staff working at the Warrior Transition Battalion here because they have to deal with Soldiers in transition who, most of the time, don't want to be there.

"A lot of credit should be given to some of these Soldiers for some of the craziness they have to put up with in order to make the wounded Soldiers' lives better," Borzotra said. "I think people need to realize the toll it takes on these Soldiers that are actually interfacing with Soldiers in transition every day."



VIRGINIA REZA

Maj. Gen. Howard B. Bromberg, right, Fort Bliss commanding general, shakes hands with retired Sgt. 1st Class Winslow Borzotra after pinning him with the Purple Heart. Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Rodgers, Fort Bliss command sergeant major, hands Bromberg the citation during a ceremony held Friday at the Warrior Transition Battalion building.

Borzotra said his most memorable experience in the Army was the entire 20-day battle of Fallujah, when he saw Soldiers doing what they were trained to do to save their buddies' lives. And one of his biggest joys was the returning of the city to its inhabitants, he said.

"Now, I just look to the future with optimism," Borzotra said. "Doing anything else would be futile. There is no point in sitting around and wasting time being depressed. Yeah, I got blown up a couple of times while I was doing my job, but the Army took care of me and hopefully the VA will too, and we move on. It's hard for me because the Army was my life and leading Soldiers is what I know."

Borzotra spent 16 years in the Army. Some of his awards include the Bronze Star with Valor, Valorous Unit Award, Presidential Citation, Silver German Marksmanship and Combat Action Badge.

Bromberg addresses the surrounding communities

VIRGINIA REZA

Monitor Staff

More than 700 people attended the State of the Military event Friday to capture Maj. Gen. Howard Bromberg's address at the Judson F. Williams Convention Center downtown.

The event began with a five-minute video depicting the history of Fort Bliss, venues the El Paso area has to offer, area demographics and ongoing and upcoming at Bliss.

"I'm not going to play the guitar like the mayor, but I'll try to give you a good overview of what's happening at Fort Bliss and where we're going in the next few years," said Bromberg.

Bromberg talked about the construction and the expansion that began in 2006 and the future plans of establishing one brigade combat team per year on the installation through 2012.

Currently, the military population is 15,000 troops and 22,000 family members. The population will increase to more than 37,000 troops and 53,000 family members by 2012, said Bromberg.

Bromberg said Fort Bliss was the ideal location for training because it can accommodate every weapon system in the Army. He said the \$4.4 billion Bliss construction was on schedule, including barracks, troop support facilities, training ranges, maintenance areas, landscaping and infrastructure – a total of more than 100 projects, 300 buildings and seven brigade combat team areas.

Each BCT will have a consolidated complex of barracks, dining facilities, headquarters and maintenance areas. Ten additional child care facilities, new recreational and fitness facilities and a \$54 million mall, the largest in all of DoD, are also in the works, making Fort Bliss the largest construction project in all of the DoD.

More than \$15 million has been spent in local stores; more than \$100 million, or 66 percent of Texas contracts, were awarded to El Paso businesses – a huge economical impact for the El Paso area, Bromberg said.

Bromberg then addressed housing issues. He said approximately more than 2,000 affordable homes will be



Fort Bliss Commanding General Maj. Gen. Howard Bromberg speaks to the Fort Bliss surrounding communities Friday during the State of the Military Address at the Judson F. Hudson Convention Center.

needed as most of the incoming troops are junior-enlisted.

"We don't need housing for colonels," said Bromberg. "We need apartments and houses that will be affordable for sergeants and specialists. We'll continue coordinating with developers and the city to make sure the community will be ready to house the influx of Soldiers and families."

Other issues addressed by Bromberg were education, medical care, environmental, safety, community relations and employment, for which he said support programs are already in place. Bromberg also talked about the testing and fielding of the high-tech equipment in the

Future Combat Systems directorate.

"There's so much happening at Fort Bliss I can't possibly tell you about all of it, but I hope I've given you a fair understanding of where we are now and where we're heading, Bromberg said.

"For our part, I'd like to thank you all on behalf of everyone at Fort Bliss," Bromberg concluded. "The people of El Paso and New Mexico are so supportive of our troops, and I can't tell you how much that means to our men and women in uniform. Thank you for all you do. Let's maintain our partnership together as we head into an exciting new era for our Southwest home," he said.



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PHOTOS BY YALONDA WRIGHT

Sgt. Raymond Wilson, from 5th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, shows veteran James Bowser the many usages of a sleeping bag at Operation Stand Down Sept. 25.

Homeless vets remain part of Soldier brotherhood



Brian Morrison, former U.S. Marine, browses clothing items at Operation Stand Down Sept. 25 at the Texas National Guard Armory.



Soldiers from the 5th BCT, 1st Armored Div. have lunch with veterans at Operation Stand Down Sept. 25 at the Texas National Guard Armory.

YALONDA WRIGHT

Monitor Staff

Fort Bliss Soldiers volunteered with social services agencies to feed and clothe homeless and near homeless military veterans Thursday and Friday.

Several representatives from local federal agencies and veterans organizations coordinated Operation Stand Down in an effort to offer the community's homeless veterans assistance in reestablishing themselves. Located at the Texas National Guard Armory on Hondo Pass was everything from food and clothing to benefits counseling and medical screening.

In addition to other veterans and volunteers from agencies like the Department of Veterans Affairs, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans Transitional Services, National Veterans Outreach Program and the Social Security Administration, 28 Soldiers from 5th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, volunteered to help issue clothes and supplies to the veterans. This was the second year the Soldiers participated in the event, said Sgt. Dakota Hubbard, public affairs representative, 5th BCT, 1st Armored Div.

Staff Sgt. Daryl Gates, 5th Brigade of 1st Armored Div., said being a part of the operation caused mixed emotions.

"It feels good for doing this," Gates said. "Then you see some of these guys that come in, what they've been through and that kind of touches you – and then you see what they're getting here and it makes you feel better."

The first Operation Stand Down in El Paso started at the Opportunity Center for the Homeless in 2002, said Veterans Outreach Coordinator Julio Gutierrez.

"It wasn't anything like this," Gutierrez said of the event, "but last year [after receiving additional grants] we got with the Department of Veterans Affairs and had the opportunity to put this together."

Gutierrez, who once was a homeless veteran, believes that change can come, "through a coordinated effort of outreach, a combination of ex-homeless veterans with professionals – social workers – because we [ex-homeless veterans] can see the problems, identify the problems and we can do things about them."

Wayman Brown, a former Sailor, moved to El Paso four years ago and was doing well until he lost his job in March. Brown said he moved into a shelter as an alternative to being evicted from his apartment.

"It makes me feel great just knowing if a veteran is willing to do something for himself, there are programs that will assist you," said Brown. "and it's almost like a fail-proof system." Brown is currently working with Gutierrez to find a job, while he is living in the veteran's transitional living community.

Gutierrez said several of the veterans who now service homeless veterans were once homeless themselves. As they get re-established, many of them come back to help others, boosting their brotherhood.

"As a coordinator," said Robert Ranzy, Veteran Transitional Services coordinator, "that's our job, to remind the public that these men [and women] have paid their dues. They're not lining up in a welfare line or anything like that; they are just getting what they're due."

Bliss, El Paso communities unite to boost education goals

VIRGINIA REZA

Monitor Staff

More than 300 Soldiers and teachers, principals and school faculty from 17 area school districts gathered at the eighth annual Partners in Education kickoff meeting Sept. 25 at the Centennial Club. PIE is designed to enhance the lives of school children through Soldier involvement and to create unity between the Fort Bliss and El Paso communities.

At the meeting, military personnel and community educators reviewed operational guidance and expectations for each partnership. They planned the implementation of partnership activities and signed a memorandum of understanding.

“It is important for Soldiers to get involved with the schools because it is a quality-of-life [issue] for the youth of our country,” said Col. Edward P. Manning, Garrison commander. “It’s important to show our commitment to the El Paso community. We want them to see that we are team players by going out there to help supplement the programs the schools already have in place.”

Exceptional military units and individuals were also recognized at the event. The exemplary award went to 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 5th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, for making a difference in the lives of youth by volunteering more than 10,000 hours. Other recognized units included the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy for contributing more than 1,800 hours; 3rd Bn., 2nd Air Defense Artillery, and 1st Bn., 43rd ADA, for contributing more than 1,500 hours; and Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command, the 62nd



Lt. Col. Ed House, commander of 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, and Leticia Guerra-Ramirez, principal of MacArthur Intermediate School, sign the Memorandum of Understanding Thursday during the Partners in Education kickoff meeting at the Centennial Club here.

Army Band and 1st CAB, 5th BCT, 1st AD, for contributing more than 600 hours.

Staff Sgt. James Sartain of 2nd CAB, 5-1 AD, was awarded the Bliss Partners in Education Volunteer of the Year award, and Diego Meza, a 6-year-old first-grade student in the Socorro district, was awarded the Soldier of the Year award for his personal example of courage and commitment. Meza was born with his abdominal organs on the outside of his body and was last year given the rank of captain by Col. Mike Carter.

There are currently 45 Bliss units volunteering in 47 different schools. Through the PIE program, Soldiers served in a variety of mentoring, tutoring, sports and music programs throughout the 17 school districts.

“Fort Bliss is a great place and this is just one of many examples of what we are doing to enhance people’s lives,” Manning said. “Partners in Education is a program across the Army, but I would put our program up against anybody’s. The amount of involvement we have reaching out to all the different schools is top-

notch here.” Lt. Col. Ed House, commander of 1st Bn., 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Bde., 1st AD, said his new unit will continue the program with MacArthur Intermediate School. He said school officials asked for 79 Soldiers, who began mentoring Friday. “The Soldiers are excited to mentor the kids,” House said. “We find it very fulfilling. It is the first opportunity our Soldiers have to serve as role models and affect a young person’s life, and we have seen it.”

House mentioned an example of a young girl who spent a lot of time in detention and was attending the alternative program. She is now an honor roll student, and school administrators attribute her improvement to her military mentors.

Carlos Martinez, EPISD director for community and governmental relations, said the El Paso community was very proud of the partnership.

“We have seen a lot of progress with students who are mentored by Soldiers from Fort Bliss,” Ramirez said.

The Fort Bliss partnership program was rated superior for the involvement and improvement of quality in education. They received the Outstanding Partnership of the Year in the El Paso and Ysleta school districts and the Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award from the Military Child Education Coalition.

“We are very proud of our Soldiers participating in this partnership,” said Manning. “We are confident that through our collaborative efforts, schools will not only be successful, but will reach exemplary status. Together, we are building tomorrow’s leaders.”



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Iraqi boy believes Soldiers make difference

MAJ. DEANNA BAGUE

Fort Bliss Public Affairs

BAGHDAD — Ten-year-old Ali Abdulla sat on the edge of his bed with rods and pins holding his leg bones in place, but still managed to smile when he spoke affectionately of two Soldiers he said touched his life.

"I love them a lot because they have a big heart," said Ali through an interpreter. "They are very special people in my life."

Ali was referring to Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, a public affairs officer for Joint Area Support Group, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and Chief Warrant Officer Russell Hayes, a Black Hawk helicopter pilot with 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment. Both Soldiers played a major role in making sure Ali and his 8-year-old sister Baraa received much-needed medical treatment.

McGuire was on patrol with Airmen who guard the streets of the International Zone and found they were not only patrolling the streets, but also distributing humanitarian aid to displaced families living here. She heard about Ali's family and met them. McGuire wrote an article about the patrol missions and mentioned the family as one of many that received clothing and toys from Airmen and Soldiers. One particular passage mentioned three members of the family had dwarfism.

That excerpt caught Hayes' attention. Hayes, who has a daughter with dwarfism, made contact with the family and discovered the children were afflicted with something more severe, he said. Compelled to help these children, Hayes managed to get in contact with Matt Roloff of *Little People, Big World*, a hit reality TV show on the TLC network.

Roloff had American surgeons and physicians contact McGuire about the children. X-rays were taken and sent to those physicians, who then made a determination to help Ali and Baraa by straightening out their limbs, said McGuire.

Dr. Bruno Himmler, the former health attaché to Iraq, paired with Drs. Ali Al-Hilli, an orthopedic surgeon and director of Medical City Orthopedic, and Scott Hoffinger, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon from California. They jointly performed surgery on both Ali and Baraa.

"We worked with the American embassy here in Iraq, with the Health Attaché's office, Multi-National Force-Iraq's surgeon's office, and my unit, the Joint Area Support Group, and found a location where the surgeries could take place," said McGuire. "I did not know what would come of this story, but it was definitely a nice surprise."

The Abdullas are a poor family, and three of the six children have a medical condition affecting their skeletal systems and spines, said Al-Hilli.

"My commander, Brigadier General Myles Deering, challenged us to make a difference," said McGuire. "I feel this Iraqi family has been a special family to



PHOTOS BY MAJ. DEANNA BAGUE

Wardah Abdulla, center, emotionally expresses her gratitude to Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire for helping her children receive medical care.

me, and not only to me but to my unit. I feel very honored to have been a part of their lives while I served over here."

"It's been a tremendous awakening for a lot of our Soldiers to learn what both sides of our responsibility are – not only on the military side, but on the human side too," said Deering, commander of JASG and 45th IBCT.

Al-Hilli said he was impressed by the acts of kindness the American Soldiers rendered.

"At first it was surprising – how can the military deal with such conditions?" said Al-Hilli. "[But] when you know them, you are sure this is part of their job. I think American people have a great heart [and] they can bring a lot of things to humanity."

Al-Hilli said Ali and Baraa's battle is not over. They need another surgery on their necks to stabilize their cervical spines, he said.

"The weight of their heads is too heavy; they have pressure on the nerves, and this will lead to paralysis of the rest of the body," said Al-Hilli.

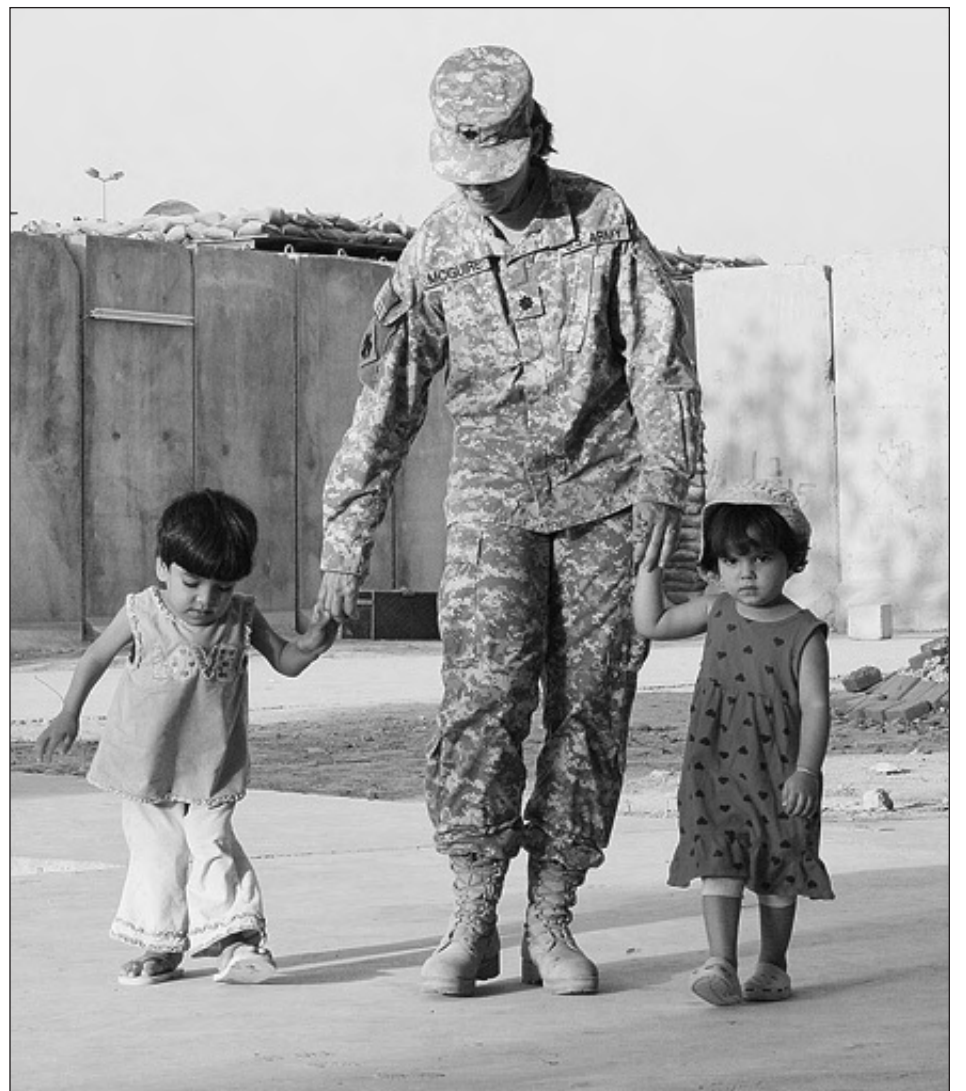
Ali and Baraa's 13-year-old sister Saja, who was able to walk up until about the age of 10, did not receive the corrective surgeries on time. "It's too late to deal with her," said Al-Hilli.

Al-Hilli said he is not sure when and how the children will receive the next surgeries they need. "I don't know the plan for the future," said Al-Hilli. "If we didn't find the family in the right time, possibly they would have been crippled in the future. The Soldiers found the family [and] helped them."

"Let us say they saved the major part of the family ... so they can go back to school," Al-Hilli concluded. "I think Ali will have a great future ... so [the Soldiers] saved his life."



Dr. Ali Al-Hilli, an orthopedic surgeon and director of Medical City Orthopedic in Baghdad, examines 10-year-old Ali Abdulla.



Lt. Col. Rhonda McGuire, a public affairs officer for Joint Area Support Group, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, walks with 8-year-old Baraa Abdulla, left, and her 2-year-old sister Tabarak.



Thirteen-year-old Saja Abdulla waves good-bye.

Bliss promotes child literacy program

VIRGINIA REZA

Monitor Staff

Children of all ages listened attentively to Col. Edward P. Manning, Garrison commander, as he read *How to Bake an American Pie* by Karma Wilson during the Tell Me a Story event held Sept. 24 at the Old Fort Bliss Museum.

"It is a great opportunity to get with the kids and show support for the education programs we have at Fort Bliss," Manning said. "Reading opens up many opportunities for children as they get older, and if they can read they are a step ahead."

The program is designed to promote family literacy and was initiated to empower military children by fostering literature skills that will help them succeed in school.

Kimberly Mchugh, parent-to-parent team leader for the Military Child Education Coalition, said the program also builds stronger peer and parent connections and a sense of pride and accomplishment.

"It is great to see all the families come out to support their children's education," Mchugh said. "This is a good way to celebrate their diversity as military families and to enjoy books as a family."

Forty-two families attended the event and were given hard-cover books portraying the 50 states. All the children received apple pies and snacks to take home. They also received family almanacs to take with them throughout their travels. The almanac had activities and a mini diary to annotate the new places they visit. Additionally, patriotic



VIRGINIA REZA

Col. Edward P. Manning reads *How to Bake an American Pie* by Karma Wilson with his daughter on his lap to help him flip pages as Fort Bliss children listen and ask questions during the Tell Me A Story event held Sept. 24 at the Old Fort Bliss Museum.

hats that had spaces to write the duty stations they lived at were given to the children.

The children also had the opportunity to participate in two activities. The first was a geography activity, where the children were given a world map and were required to put stars on the different

states and countries they lived in as a family. They also constructed cactus magnets they can use to hang their school work on the refrigerator.

"The story was cool because the pie was going to blow up," Sebastian, a 7-year-old second-grade student, said of *American Pie*.

"I want to come over again and again and again!" said 4-year-old Nicholas.

The Military Child Education Coalition staff schedule Tell Me a Story events, which are free of charge to those participating, in the fall, winter and spring. For more information, call 525-0096.

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At the beginning of the year, GECU selected six families to participate in a year-long savings challenge to help them learn how to save and develop better financial habits. And you were encouraged to share their journeys – and learn right along with them – **creating your own savings challenge!**

This year's savings challenge is reaching its midway point, and our families have come a long way since January! With the help of their GECU coaches, they've learned to set goals, develop strategies for saving money and have significantly reduced their debt.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Cliff Ferby, left, a retired Soldier and the new Park University liaison for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, and Sally Hunter, regional director for Park University, pose for a picture in front of the university's Fort Bliss campus.

Retired Soldier takes role of Park's USASMA liaison

YALONDA WRIGHT

Monitor Staff

A retired Soldier was named the new Park University campus center director for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy here.

Cliff Ferby, who served more than 24 years in the Army and six years with the university as an instructor, will be responsible for Park's operations and academic programs related to USASMA.

Sally Hunter, regional director for Park, said Ferby's knowledge of USASMA and his former military experience gave him an advantage during the hiring process.

"He's going to be a great asset to Fort Bliss and to Park University at Fort Bliss," she said.

Park was founded in 1875 and has served the Fort Bliss community for more than 30 years. Approximately 60 percent of the students who attend the university are active-duty military, family members, retired military and Department of Defense civilians.

Park offers a variety of academic programs to include three associate degrees and seven options for bachelor degrees. The undergraduate terms are accelerated – seven or eight weeks in

length – and the class schedules are designed for students to complete their degrees quickly. The university also offers an online option to give students even more flexibility. There is little need to change degree plans whenever military orders require a change of station because 40 military bases in the U.S. have campuses.

Park offers a block of classes scheduled specifically for the students of the academy who wish to pursue or continue degrees while attending the academy. These classes run Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 5 p.m. In order to apply for admission, academy students should visit Roxanna Taylor at USASMA on East Fort Bliss. Others who are interested should stop by Bldg. 639 on Merritt Road and speak with a Park counselor.

"The Army pays 100 percent of the Soldiers' tuition, up to \$4,500," said Ferby. "Our mission is to get the word out to the students of USASMA."

Financial aid is also available for DoD civilians and family members. Park University administrative offices are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 562-8450 or visit www.park.edu.

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Capt. Neal Lape, commander of A Battery, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, and his wife Capt. Angie Lape, commander of F Company, 1st Battalion, 43rd ADA, stand with their units' guidon bearers, Pfc. Andre Allen and Jose Rivera, respectively.

CAPT. TAMARA GONZALES

His and hers commands: Couple balances leadership, family life

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER MICHAEL BLAKE and CAPT. TAMARA GONZALES

11th ADA Bde. Public Affairs

Military life has its demands, and there are many who find them to be well worth the sacrifice. However, these demands are twofold for dual-military couples such as Capt. Neal and Angie Lape, who are both commanders.

"Our small family of three has significantly grown to over 300," said Neal, commander of A Battery, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment.

Neal has been in the Army for seven years while his wife, Angie, commander of F Company, 1st Battalion, 43rd ADA, has been in for six. They have been married since 2003 and have a 3-year-old son, Connor.

"Leadership looks up to [Angie] both as being in command while also having a family," said 1st Sgt. Michael Hall, first sergeant of F Co., 1-43 ADA. Hall is also part of a dual-military marriage; his wife, Sgt. Maj. Simone Hall, is a facilitator at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. "She is really dedicated to the Army, her unit and her family."

Being dual-military has brought with it many family challenges for the Lapes, they said. For example, once while Angie was at a Weapons, Tactics and Instruction exercise at Yuma, Ariz., her husband was called upon for a deployment. At this time and others, when military missions such as ranges, training and other daily demands of command business conflicted with personal

schedules, they call upon family and their Family Child Care provider.

"Find a good babysitter and latch on," said Angie. "Have faith that they are taking good care of your child so you will not worry about them."

When Angie arrived at Fort Bliss, she was assigned as the platoon leader for B Btry., 5th Bn., 52nd ADA, while Neal was already the launcher platoon leader there. During this time they both deployed in support of Operational Iraqi Freedom. Neal then became the executive officer for B Btry., while Angie became the fire control platoon leader for D Btry.

Between May 2004 and 2007, Angie was the battalion S-4, while Neal held multiple other positions within the battalion, attended the Air Defense Captains Career Course and had a one-year assignment in Korea. Connor was 6 months old when Neal left for the assignment.

Utilizing the Army's dual-military service program and staying on parallel career paths are beneficial and allowed both parents to remain close to their son, said Neal.

Neal became the commander of A Btry., 5-52 ADA, in September 2006 and the commander of A/4 ADA Regt. in July. Angie became the commander for F Btry. in May.

"He is very understanding of all the Soldiers' family needs and can relate to dual-military," said Chief Warrant Officer John Fallin, an air and missile defense tactician and technician who is married to Capt. Amanda Fallin, assistant G-2 for the 32nd Army Air Missile Defense Command.

Federally connected parents asked to fill out survey

EPISD NEWS

Special to The Monitor

Beginning Monday, parents of students attending schools in the El Paso Independent School District will receive a survey asking them to verify or update the information on the form so the district may be eligible to receive federal funding for students whose parents live or work on federal property.

The Impact Aid law provides assistance to local school districts with concentrations of children residing on Indian reservations, military bases, low-rent housing properties or other federal properties. To a lesser extent, IA also includes children with parents working for the federal government. This includes parents of students who work on federal land, and civilians and those who work for contractors on federal land. Last year, EPISD received nearly \$4 million in federal Impact Aid.

Impact Aid money can help pay for construction and remodeling to accommodate federally connected students or for the education of all students. It is one of the federal education programs where the funds go directly to the school district without bureaucracy or regulations.

Although Impact Aid does not merely come from students with military parents, EPISD does have a large enrollment of students whose parents are in the military. Four campuses sit on military land, providing for a unique relationship and partnership between EPISD and Fort Bliss. Milam, Logan and Bliss elementary schools and Chapin High School reside on military land. EPISD educates more than 4,000 military students on an annual basis at campuses throughout the district.

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Scottish Rite dinner

Across the nation, members of each Scottish Rite Valley held their first military appreciation dinners for servicemembers of nearby military installations. The El Paso Scottish Rite treated Fort Bliss Soldiers and Marines to dinner Friday. Soldiers and Marines learned about the El Paso Scottish Rite legacy and the history of Masons in Washington, D.C. Retired Marine Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Wilkerson, guest speaker for the dinner, spoke about the many Masons throughout past wars and their contributions.



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Fort Bliss aviation history honored at airport gallery

LACEY JUSTINGER

Fort Bliss Public Affairs

The Army and Fort Bliss' influence on El Paso history and development can be seen in the Aviation History Gallery, which opened Friday in the El Paso International Airport.

"An organization that doesn't have a history doesn't have a future," said Patrick T. Abeln, the El Paso International Airport director of aviation. "In the early days there was not a lot of separation between military and civilian flights. With the existence of Biggs, we had military aviation in the area long before civilian aviation."

The gallery features historical photographs and artifacts documenting the creation and expansion of flight in El Paso.

John Paul Jones, an aviation artist and historian, highlighted the influence of Fort Bliss and Biggs Army Airfield in attracting and diversifying local aviation as part of the airport's 80th anniversary lecture series.

Jones said the early Army planes were all experimental, and that "everything [pilots] did in the '20s and '30s was a record-setting attempt — a speed record, an altitude record or a distance record."

The lectures, photographs and exhibits cover the history of the Fort Bliss Flying Field, which existed from 1919 to 1926, and the creation of Biggs Army Airfield in 1926, which was named after a local World War I Soldier.

The first aircraft assigned to Fort Bliss was the C-1 balloon. Unfortunately, the aircraft hangar's door faced north, thus making the removal of the balloon from the hangar very risky and hazardous with the western winds whipping off the mountains.

One photograph from 1919 depicts how spectators at early-era air shows were dropped off at the Cassidy Gate via a trolley and had to walk the entire length of the post to the flight line between Biggs and the current airport.

"In the old days they even had to caution the cavalry Soldiers not to wear their spurs while getting into a fabric airplane," Jones said.

The El Paso International Airport regularly recognizes and honors the influence of Soldiers, the Army and Fort Bliss in the local historical and current

"Soldiers, Fort Bliss and Biggs have been a huge asset to us, and I'd like to think we help them out too."

Patrick T. Abeln
El Paso International Airport
Director of Aviation

aviation environments. They recently added signs directing the thousands of traveling Soldiers to the airport's Military Help Desk, and a new banner promoting Fort Bliss greets departing and arriving passengers in the terminal.

"In World War II, Korea and even today, we have serviced a lot of military aircraft," said Abeln. "It's a strong partnership. Soldiers, Fort Bliss and Biggs have been a huge asset to us, and I'd like to think we help them out too."



LACEY JUSTINGER

John Paul Jones, a local aviation artist and historian, gives a lecture on El Paso's aviation history while he stands in front of a photograph of a pilot and his plane on the Fort Bliss Flying Field.

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ASIST program to intervene with climbing suicide rates

CAPT. TAMARA GONZALES

11th ADA Bde. Public Affairs

The rate of suicides among active-duty Soldiers is on pace to surpass both last year's numbers and the rate of suicide in the general U.S. population for the first time since the Vietnam War, according to U.S. Army officials in a recent CNN report.

The 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade is taking proactive steps to ensure mission and personal success in suicide intervention through Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. The most recent training was conducted Thursday and Friday at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on Hondo Pass.

ASIST is a two-day, skill-building workshop that prepares caregivers of all kinds to provide suicide first-aid interventions.

"This training is different than what the Army has been teaching for years," said Lt. Col. Rick Sones, the 11th ADA Bde. chaplain.

The old training taught people to look out for those with suicidal tendencies, while the new training focuses on teaching people to be ready if a person with suicidal tendencies comes to you, said Sones.

"We are getting to learn the fundamentals of intervention," said Sgt. Mark Mazure, a mechanic for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Task Force Counter-Rocket, Artillery and Mortar. "Once you see the signs, you know how to turn it around so you can help those people yourself."

The training consisted of three stages with lectures, videos, small-group discussions and scenario-driven situations. During the first stage, students focused their attitudes and thoughts on suicide so they could understand individuals come from different backgrounds of varying value systems.

"It's not all about me – my views and my opinions – but about them, so I need to set aside my own feelings and focus on the other person," said Sgt. Monique Woods, a mechanic for HHB, 11th ADA Bde.

The second stage of training guided students step-by-step through the three-phase suicide intervention model. During the first phase, Connecting, the suicide intervention counselor built a connection with individuals who had suicidal tendencies. The counselor then started to



CAPT. TAMARA GONZALES

Col. Joseph DeAntona, 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade commander, congratulates Sgt. Monique Woods, a mechanic with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, on her graduation from the ASIST program Friday.

make an emotional connection – referred to as the Understanding phase – with the person. The third phase is called the Assisting phase, and during this phase the counselor provided the individual with a safe plan and resources.

"The model is [a] good basis," said Sgt. Justin Wilson, a senior engagement controller for B Btry., 3rd Battalion, 43rd ADA. "It tells you where you've been, where you're at and where to go in the process."

The third and final stage of training provided students with the opportunity to practice what they had learned through small workgroups, followed by scenario-driven individual practice.

"Everyone should go through this class so they know how to deal with a person having suicidal thoughts or problems in general," said Sgt. Ersi Madrid, training room noncommissioned officer in charge of E Btry., 3-43 ADA.

At the end of the class students received their graduation certificate and congratulations from the class instructors as well as from Col. Joseph DeAntona, 11th ADA Bde. commander.

"The Army is people, and the Soldiers are the foundation in everything we do," said DeAntona. "This is a topic we've identified as a problem – that we're attacking with education. When the Army sees a problem, it faces the problem head-on."

Smile!

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EMERGENCIES ACCEPTED

Bliss observes Fire Prevention Week 2008

JAMES NARLOCK

Fort Bliss Assistant Fire Chief

Fire Prevention Week has its roots in the Great Chicago Fire, which occurred Oct. 9, 1871. It took roughly 27 hours to destroy 17,400 structures on 2,000 acres, kill more than 250 people and leave another 100,000 homeless. This particular tragedy inspired reform across America, spurring new fire safety codes and public awareness. Although the fire's origin has never been determined, there has been much speculation over how it started. One of the more popular legends is that Catherine O'Leary was milking her cow when the animal kicked over a lamp, setting O'Leary's barn on fire and starting this spectacular blaze. This was never proven, though if O'Leary were alive today, she would most likely deny it.

On the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, the Fire Marshals Association of North America (now known as the International Fire Marshals Association) sponsored the first-ever National Fire Prevention Day. This led to an annual observance as a way to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention. In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire



Prevention Day proclamation. Since 1922, National Fire Prevention Week has been observed the week in which Oct. 5 falls. The president of the United States has signed a proclamation pronouncing a national observance during that week every year since 1925.

Dedicated to raising public awareness about the dangers of fires and how to prevent them, the National Fire Protection Association has officially sponsored Fire Prevention Week since the observance was first established. This year, the Fort Bliss Fire Department will too observe Fire Prevention Month during October. Fire Prevention Week activities are planned Oct. 5 through 11.

This year's national theme is "Prevent Home Fires!" This year's theme focuses on preventing fires in

the home – where we spend most of our time and where 80 percent of U.S. fire deaths occur.

The Fort Bliss Fire Department will be visiting both Fort Bliss and area public schools during Fire Prevention Week to present the "Prevent Home Fires!" show. Our goal is to ensure that our Soldiers and families are proactive in the prevention of home fires.

We are dedicated to the protection of life and property and the guarding against the devastating effects of fire. Preventing home fires through training and proper planning can make the difference between life and death in most cases. A typical home fire can become deadly fast. From the time the smoke alarm sounds, people may have as little as two minutes to escape.

Your Fort Bliss firefighters wish to invite all of our community residents to

Fire Facts

Fact 1

In 2007, there were an estimated 399,000 reported home structure fires resulting in 2,865 civilian deaths and 12,500 civilian injuries and \$6.8 billion in direct damage in the United States. Home fires caused 84 percent of civilian deaths and 77 percent of injuries.

Source: NFPA's "Fire Loss in the United States During 2007" report by Michael J. Karter

Fact 2

Cooking equipment fires accounted for 40 percent of all reported home structure fires in 2005 and 36 percent of home civilian injuries.

Source: NFPA's "Home Fires Involving Cooking Equipment" report by John R. Hall Jr., February 2008.

come visit us during our Fire Prevention Week Open House this October. We encourage you to visit your nearest fire station, where you can learn about this year's "Prevent Home Fires!" theme and the importance of avoiding home fires through proper planning. If you are interested in bringing your group for a tour of a fire station, contact the Fire Prevention Section at 568-8194 or 568-8195.

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Garrison customer assessments coming soon

CUSTOMER MGMT. SERVICES

Customers who live, work or do business at Fort Bliss will have an upcoming opportunity to provide detailed feedback about all of the post's services. The annual customer assessments are one of two new programs which fall under Customer Management Services. CMS is the Installation Management Command's new program for collecting customer feedback and using the data to evaluate and improve delivery of installation programs and services.

Most Army installations, including Fort Bliss, will see the multi-page, Web-based assessment for the first time when it opens Oct. 21. Some installations, like Fort Jackson, S.C, Fort Eustis, Va., and forts Richardson and Wainwright, Alaska, participated in the demonstration phase of the program in 2007, when more than 1,500 customers completed the survey. The customers – Soldiers, family members, retirees, veterans and civilian employees – provided information about the importance of programs and services,

CUSTOMER ASSESSMENT

and rated how well the installation is providing them.

The assessment is divided into two main categories, corporate and constituent, which are accessed from the same Web link that will be published within the next few weeks. When a customer begins the survey, they will be asked to provide demographic data that will automatically direct them to the appropriate corporate or constituent assessment. In that way, family members or retirees, for example, will not be asked to rate services like the Central Issue Facility or the Ammunition Supply Point – two services used by Soldiers and their commanders.

Within the survey, customers will be asked to rate service performance on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), and importance, also on a scale of 1 to 5. Any ratings of 1 or 2 must have an explanation describing any issues.

Data provided by unit commanders, command sergeants major, first sergeants, senior civilians and senior staff will be captured in the corporate portion. There they will rate the performance of the services and the importance of the service in relation to the accomplishment of their units' missions.

"This is a brilliant feedback service for Soldiers and their families across

all installations," said Tony Patino, the IMCOM West Region CMS coordinator. "All customers will be able to rate how well the services they receive match their expectations. We can use this feedback to improve services, which will improve readiness and retention."

As soon as the Web link is published, expect to see an information push from multiple fronts – future issues of *The Monitor*, flyers, MWR marquees and others. The more customers in each category who take the 20 to 30 minutes to complete the assessment, the more accurate and substantial the data collected. This will provide a baseline for future annual assessments.

The data will be returned to the installation in November, when it will be used to identify and document best practices in areas and develop plans for improvement in others.

For more information about the October customer service assessments, call Melissa House at 568-1612.

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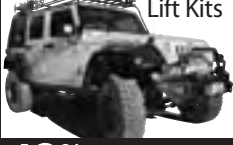
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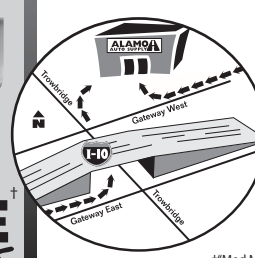
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